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CaliforniaVolunteers.CA.GOV

2024 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity



AmeriCorps

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications due November 2, 2023

Note for Continuation Programs

If you are currently funded by CV and need to apply for year two or three continuation funding, this RFA does not apply to you. Instructions will be emailed directly to you by CV for both competitive and formula continuation programs at a later date.

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Message From the Chief Service Officer

We are thrilled to release the FY 2024 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA) to provide opportunities for individuals to serve communities by addressing the most pressing issues in California. Each year, with the release of the Request for Applications, California Volunteers articulates our strategy for addressing the state's most pressing challenges. We welcome applicants to consider how they may partner with us, using the AmeriCorps national service model to engage individuals and communities in making a better California for all.

As AmeriCorps celebrates its 30th anniversary, California Volunteers continues to prioritize our AmeriCorps investments in response to the most pressing challenges facing California. In this year's Request for Applications, we will again focus funding programs that address the following priorities:

- **Climate Action:** Supporting and educating communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent and mitigate wildfires, conserve land and water, reduce resource use, and/or increase renewable energy use.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Improving at-risk ecosystems, improving use and protection of natural environment, and/or increasing sustainable practices and education to build resilience in natural ecosystems and communities.
- **Education:** Improving educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children, including improved school readiness; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or increasing readiness and access for post-secondary education and career opportunities.
- **Food Security:** Increasing food security and stability for our most vulnerable communities
- **Disaster Services:** Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increasing community resiliency.
- **Resource Access:** Providing access to vital resources, services, and benefits critical to moving our most vulnerable communities from crisis to stability through peer support, resource navigation, and case management.

Across the country, service programs are struggling to recruit and retain qualified candidates for AmeriCorps positions. The top reason cited for candidates declining an offer or not completing their service year is directly related to the high living costs in conjunction with a low living allowance. This year, California Volunteers is deepening our collective commitment to service and to future AmeriCorps members by increasing the minimum required living allowance for full-time members to \$30,000 (prorated for less-than-full-time members). We believe that increasing the minimum required living allowance is a critical step to improving recruitment and advancing AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps has established a tremendous legacy over the last 30 years, and we want to build on this legacy and continue to grow the largest, most diverse service corps in the nation. Thank you for all you do for California. We look forward to reviewing your application.

Warmly,

Josh Fryday
Chief Service Office for the State of California

Overview

Disclosure

Publication of this Request for Applications does not obligate California Volunteers (CV) to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. The actual level and timing of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal and state appropriations.

Funds requested under this opportunity are subject to applicable federal laws, rules, and regulations. References to specific regulations will be linked to www.ecfr.gov.

Important Dates

Notice of Intent: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply to CV by Wednesday, October 18, 2023. Complete the Notice [here](#).

Application Deadline: Complete applications are due to CV by 5:00 p.m. PT on Thursday, November 2, 2023.

Application Notification: Applicants will be notified of their status by December 2023. Final funding decisions will be communicated by May 2024.

Funding Purpose

California Volunteers is the State Service Commission responsible for engaging Californians in service, volunteering, and civic action to tackle our State's most pressing challenges. California Volunteers has engaged local communities through innovative and impactful grantmaking and program development at both the state and local levels for nearly 30 years. By supporting more than 4,000 AmeriCorps State members annually, California Volunteers aims to inspire the next generation of civic leaders, create a pathway to debt-free college, and build a culture of service and civic engagement in California.

The *2024 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity* awards AmeriCorps grants to community partnerships that will engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-informed or evidence-based service solutions (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn up to \$10,000 in scholarship awards that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

This *2024 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity* should be read together with the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520-2550. The following documents are necessary to complete the application for 2024-25 AmeriCorps funding:

- 1) Request for Applications
- 2) Mandatory Supplemental Guidance
- 3) Application Instructions
- 4) Application Forms
- 5) National Performance Measure Instructions

Application Timeline

This timeline is subject to change due to federal announcements and other events.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| October 18, 2023 | Notice of Intent to Apply due |
| November 2, 2023 | Applications due by 5:00 p.m. PT* |
| November 3– 22, 2023 | Application Review Period |
| November 22, 2023 | Selected Applicants Notified |
| November 27 – December 6, 2023 | Competitive Applicant Clarification and Strengthening Period** |
| December 7-15, 2023 | Competitive Application Review/Final Edits*** |
| May 2024 | Final Funding Decisions Announced |
| July-October 2024 | Contracting Process and Program Launch |

* Applicants should give themselves ample time ahead of the deadline to submit their application in eGrants.

** Applicants and their partnership representatives must be available during this timeframe to respond to CVs' clarification requests and feedback to strengthen their application.

*** During this period, applicants must have appropriate staff available to enter and submit application into AmeriCorps's web-based management system.

A. Program Description

A.1. California Volunteers

As the State Service Commission for California, California Volunteers (CV) is tasked with engaging Californians in service, volunteering, and civic action to tackle our State's most pressing challenges. By supporting more than 5,000 AmeriCorps State members annually, California Volunteers aims to inspire the next generation of civic leaders, create a pathway to debt-free college, and build a culture of service. Josh Fryday, State of California Chief Service Officer, leads the agency in consultation with a 25-member Commission appointed by the Governor. The Commission develops and adopts policies that guide the State's AmeriCorps grantmaking process.

California Volunteers receives funds to support service programs in California from AmeriCorps, a federal agency that brings people to tackle the country's most pressing challenges, through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities.

A.2. Purpose of AmeriCorps State Funding

AmeriCorps is a national service program that provides opportunities for Americans each year to serve their country as AmeriCorps members by engaging in intensive results-driven service that addresses community problems. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. AmeriCorps members are recruited, trained, supervised, and managed by the funded organization, and may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 in scholarship funds from California Volunteers and the National Service Trust that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

To be eligible to serve in an AmeriCorps program, an individual must be:

- U.S. Citizen;
- U.S. National or Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States;
- At least 17 years of age (no upper age limit); and
- High school graduate or GED recipients (or working towards this goal).

Additionally, selected candidates must meet National Service Criminal History Check requirements (see Award Administration Information Section).

AmeriCorps grants are awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organizations proposing to engage members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance). Grants are solely for program expenses and cannot be used for general organizational operating expenses. AmeriCorps members or grant funds can help meet unmet needs or can expand an organization's ability to better address community needs, but cannot be used to duplicate, displace or supplant resources that already exist in a community.

A.3. Funding Priorities

To be eligible for funding, applicants must propose a service program that will place AmeriCorps members in communities to address unmet needs in one or more of the following focus areas:

- Climate Action: Supporting and educating communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent and mitigate wildfires, conserve land and water, reduce resource use, and/or increase renewable energy use.

- **Environmental Stewardship:** Improving at-risk ecosystems, improving use and protection of natural environment, and/or increasing sustainable practices and education to build resilience in natural ecosystems and communities.
- **Education:** Improving educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children, including improved school readiness; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or increasing readiness and access for post-secondary education and career opportunities.
- **Food Security:** Increasing food security and stability for our most vulnerable communities
- **Disaster Services:** Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increasing community resiliency.
- **Resource Access:** Providing access to vital resources, services, and benefits critical to moving our most vulnerable communities from crisis to stability through peer support, resource navigation, and case management.

In addition to proposing a program in one or more of the above focus areas, applications that have one or more of the following components as a key program design element will receive preference in the California Volunteers grant review selection process:

- **Organizations leading service in communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals**, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities.
- **Climate action and environmental stewardship**, including supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities.
- Programs that **provide additional benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at enhancing member experience and bolstering member recruitment and retention** such as paying more than the minimum living allowance, transportation, housing, food, etc.
- Programs that **create workforce pathways** for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support.
- **Evidence-based interventions** on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#) that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence.
- Programs that **support civic bridgebuilding** programs and projects to reduce polarization and community divisions; and providing training in civic bridgebuilding skills and techniques to AmeriCorps members.
- Programs focused on **improving educational outcomes** for economically disadvantaged children, including improved school readiness; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or increasing readiness and access for post-secondary education and career opportunities; and those that prepare AmeriCorps members to enter teaching careers.

To receive priority consideration, applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding. Applications addressing community challenges outside of the stated priorities are welcomed.

A.4. Program Authority

Awards under this Notice are authorized by the [National and Community Service Act of 1990](#), as amended, ([42 U.S.C. §12501 et seq.](#))

B. Award Information

B.1. Estimated Funds Available

The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations, which has yet to be determined for FY 2024. Generally, CV receives AmeriCorps grant funding from AmeriCorps through two federal pots of money: formula and competitive funds. California Volunteers receives formula funds from AmeriCorps through a population-based allocation. Competitive funds are awarded to CV to support a select number of programs that have competed successfully in both the state grant competition administered by CV and the national grant competition administered by AmeriCorps. All applicants first apply for funding through CV to receive a state ranking and then CV selects which applications are submitted to the AmeriCorps State and National competition for competitive funding consideration.

Applications submitted to the national competition are not guaranteed funding at any level. AmeriCorps makes final award decisions for competitive funds; those applicants approved for competitive grant awards are considered grantees of CV. Unsuccessful applicants submitted to the AmeriCorps State and National grant competition will return to a rank-order list for consideration of formula funds based on results from the CV grant review process.

In making formula funding decisions, CV will award funds in the following order: Governor's initiatives, continuation programs, followed by successful new/recompeting applicants in rank order.

B.2. Estimated Award Amount

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions - as determined by the scope of the program. CV will review applications and determine the final award amount based on availability of funds. Award amounts may vary from the requested amounts.

B.3. Period of Performance

California Volunteers anticipates making three-year grant awards. California Volunteers generally makes an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget. Applicants must submit a one-year budget. The period of performance is 12 months within the period of August 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of future appropriations and satisfactory performance.

B.4. Performance Measurement Requirements

All applications must include a set of performance measures that assesses impact on the beneficiary population(s) served, the member experience, and community engagement as follows:

- One output and at least one corresponding outcome for the primary needs and service activity performed by AmeriCorps members. This measure may be applicant determined or a National Performance Measure depending on the program's theory of change. Applicants proposing more than one program activity must include at least an output for each additional program activity proposed, provided that the output measures a significant program activity.

Note: CV values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures. Applicants are strongly encouraged to focus member service hours in service activities that are significant to the program's theory of change and intended outcomes.

- One output and at least one corresponding outcome that measures the knowledge and/or skills gained by AmeriCorps members as a result of their participation in the program.
- Two output measures that track the number of volunteers recruited by AmeriCorps members to expand the impact and reach of the program in the communities served and the number of hours contributed by those volunteers.

Please see the California Performance Measurement Worksheets (PMWs) additional details and instructions.

National Performance Measures

National Performance Measures are developed by AmeriCorps (the federal agency). CV expects applicants to use National Performance Measures if they align with the applicant's theory of change. The National Performance Measures can be found in the 2024 National Performance Measures Instructions.

For more information, see the Application Instructions for specific requirements for each required performance measurement area.

B.5. Cost Per MSY

Applicants request for the number and types of AmeriCorps member positions (slots) that are needed to address the community need stated in their application as well as the federal funds to partially support those. Applicants are responsible to recruit and manage AmeriCorps members to fill those positions. Types of member positions (slot types) available are Full-time (1,700-hour service term), Three-Quarter-time (1,200 hours), Half-time (900 hours), Reduced Half-time (675 hours), Quarter-time (450 hours), Minimum-time (300 hours), and Abbreviated-time (100 hours).

A 1700-hour (Full-time) AmeriCorps member position is designed for one service year; hereafter referred to as one Member Service Year (MSY). The MSY is similar to a Full Time Equivalent (FTE), measuring positions as a fraction of full-time, so a full-time member is 1 MSY and a half-time member is .5 MSY.

Funding requests are in proportion to the number of members (MSYs) that a grantee will support. This is known as the cost per MSY. It is the 'cost' to the federal government, in support of the AmeriCorps program. The grant cost per MSY is determined by dividing the total AmeriCorps/federal share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested.

The maximum amount of federal funds that an applicant may request from AmeriCorps per MSY is determined on an annual basis for each grant type.

| Grant Program | Maximum |
|---|--------------------|
| Cost Reimbursement | \$25,000 |
| Full-Cost Fixed Amount | \$25,000 |
| Professional Corps Fixed Amount | \$1,000* |
| Education Award Program (EAP) Fixed Amount | \$800 or \$1,000** |

For example, an applicant requesting for 25 MSYs (or 25 full-time equivalent service positions) may request up to \$23,000 to support each MSY requested (or the number of full-time equivalent service positions requested). In this instance, the maximum amount of AmeriCorps funds the applicant may request would be \$575,000 (25 MSYs x \$23,000 cost per MSY = \$575,000).

*AmeriCorps requires Professional Corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-AmeriCorps resources. CV will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need based on the materials reviewed. CV reserves the right to treat an applicant that meets the statutory requirements of a Professional Corps as such, whether or not they submitted their application as a professional corps program.

**Per 42 U.S.C. 12581a, AmeriCorps may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

Subject to funding availability, California Volunteers reserves the right to waive the \$25,000 cost per member limit on a case-by-case basis and award a cost per MSY up to \$27,000 in formula funds for applications that meet certain California Volunteers strategic criteria and/or funding priorities.

B.6. Type of Award

Award recipients will be assigned to a Program Specialist, who will be responsible for assessing recipient performance, providing training and technical assistance, and serving as the primary point of contact for award recipients.

California Volunteers may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Cost Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants as stated in the chart below.

Professional Corps applicants are ineligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants. Please see the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for more information, including definitions of terminology.

| Grant Types | Cost Reimbursement | Fixed Amount | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Available Subtypes | Traditional | Full-Cost | Education Award Program (EAP) | Professional Corps | No Cost Slots |
| Maximum Cost per MSY* | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | \$800 or \$1,000** | \$1,000 | \$0 |
| Type of Slots in the National Service Trust*** | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT | FT Only | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT |
| Budget Submission Required at time of Application | Yes | Yes | | Yes, if requesting operational funds | Yes |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|--|-----|
| Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs | No | Yes | | Yes |
| Special Requirements | N/A | N/A | Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate # of such professionals. Member salaries & benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves & not included in budget. | N/A |
| Financial Reporting Requirements | Yes | No | | |
| Available to new Applicants | Yes | No | Yes | |

* Member Service Year (MSY): One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1,700 service hours.)

** Per [42 U.S.C. § 12581a](#), the Corporation may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

***FT = Full Time, TQT = Three Quarter Time, HT = Half Time, RHT = Reduced Half Time, QT = Quarter Time, MT = Minimum Time, AT = Abbreviated Time

B.7. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost share or matching requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AmeriCorps does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program, therefore organizations should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but are not eligible to receive Full-Cost Fixed Amount grants.

Cost Reimbursement Grants

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. The applicant's match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission.

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in [45 CFR 2521.60](#) and below.

| AmeriCorps Funding Year | 1, 2, 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
|----------------------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Grantee Share Requirements | 24% | 26% | 30% | 34% | 38% | 42% | 46% | 50% |

[42 U.S.C. §12571\(e\)](#) requires grantees that use other Federal Funds as matching funds for an AmeriCorps grant to report those amounts and sources to AmeriCorps on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

Match Waiver

A waiver to these match requirements may be requested by submitting the Match Waiver Request form as part of your application. California Volunteers will submit your request to AmeriCorps for review by AmeriCorps' Office of Grant Administration.

Alternative Match

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in [45 CFR 2521.60\(b\)](#). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule should submit the Alternative Match Request form at the time the application is submitted.

B.8. Indirect Costs

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a Federally approved indirect cost rate or a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly, as outlined in 2 CFR 200.4133. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use previously approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across all federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate, or that will be using the 10% *de minimis* rate, must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, under section 121(d) of the [National and Community Service Act of 1990](#), as amended and AmeriCorps' regulations at [45 CFR 2521.95](#) and [2540.110](#), no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State and National grants. Cost reimbursement application budgets must include a 2% CV Share of administrative costs that will be retained by California Volunteers when the grant is awarded.

Use the [AmeriCorps eGrants Indirect Cost Rate \(IDCR\) User Instructions](#) for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate. Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect cost rate agreement via email.

Please note: To request a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, when AmeriCorps is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to IndirectCostRate@cns.gov. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

B.9. Minimum Program Size

The minimum program size funded by CV is 20 MSY (full-time equivalent member positions). California Volunteers believes this MSY requirement is necessary to provide members in quantities that make a substantial difference in meeting community needs. Applicants requesting less than the minimum required MSY level must include a compelling rationale with the application in order for the application to not be disqualified.

B.10. Maximum Grant Amount

Applications being considered by CV for competitive funds do not have a maximum limit. Applicants who are unsuccessful in securing competitive funding will be considered for formula funding, based on their state ranking. New applicants considered for formula funding may be subjected to a reduced budget up to \$850,000.

B.11. Minimum Number of Members per Service Site

To ensure strong program design and to provide members with at least a minimal mutual support network, successful applicants must place a minimum of two AmeriCorps members at each service location as part of their program design. Exceptions to this requirement must be supported by compelling rationale in the application and receive approval from CV.

B.12. Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. The proposed budget must include a living allowance for all members that are within the required range per member (except as noted below).

All applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a member living allowance that is adequate to meet basic living costs in order to successfully recruit and retain AmeriCorps members. Applicants must provide a living allowance of at least \$30,000 for Full-Time members serving a 1700-hour term of service and a prorated amount for all other slot types. Applicants who can demonstrate they have been able to achieve a high enrollment rate (at least 80% or higher for the most recent two completed program years) in a low cost of living area of the state may request to waive this requirement. See the Application Instructions for more information.

| Service Term | Minimum # of Hours | Minimum Living Allowance | Maximum Total Living Allowance |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Full-time | 1,700 | \$30,000 | \$37,400 |
| Three Quarter-time | 1,200 | \$21,176 | \$26,180 |
| Half-time | 900 | \$15,882 | \$18,700 |
| Reduced Half-time | 675 | \$11,912 | \$14,212 |
| Quarter-time | 450 | \$7,941 | \$9,724 |
| Minimum-time | 300 | \$5,294 | \$7,854 |
| Abbreviated-time | 100 | \$1,765 | \$2,244 |

In most instances, the grant received by an applicant will not cover the full amount of the living allowance provided to members and the applicant must use its own or other resources to

supplement member living allowance. Because the living allowance is taxable, subject to FICA, and the minimum living allowance may not fully cover the actual living expenses of members, programs may wish to offer living allowances above the required minimum living allowance for each slot type.

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirement

Education Award Program (EAP) Grantees are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the table above.

Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) maximum living allowance set in the table above. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits including childcare are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve and are not included in the application budget.

B.13. Education Awards

All AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for a federal Segal AmeriCorps Education Award paid outside of the grant from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. Use the [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) webpage for more information.

In addition to the federal education award, AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a 1700-hour term of service will earn a supplemental state California For All Education Award for a combined total of up to \$10,000.

B.14. Enrollment Requirements

Grantees are expected to enroll all MSYs/slots awarded in the grant.

California Volunteers may award a lower number of MSYs/slots than the amount requested for recompeting applicants if the applicant had achieved an enrollment rate below 80% in its two most recently completed program years (2021-2022 and/or 2022-2023). If the applicant's enrollment rates for the two most recently completed program years were below 80%, any request to maintain and/or expand MSYs/slots will not be considered unless a detailed plan for improvement, including a progress update for 2023-2024 is included with the application. New applicants are not held to this requirement.

Once funded, California Volunteers reserves the right to adjust a program's grant amount due to low enrollment in [order](#) to maintain the awarded cost per member MSY. Successful applicants that do not fully enroll may be subject to a reduction in grant award amount and are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

B.15. Retention Requirements

Retention is determined by enrolled members who complete their service term. Members who quit the program effect your retention rate. Though some attrition is normal, we expect grantees to pursue a strong member experience leading to at least the AmeriCorps desired minimum of 85% retention. Low retention rates will have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and recompete processes. Successful applicants that do not retain members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

B.16. Evaluation Requirements

If the applicant has previously received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed (see the Mandatory Supplemental Information for the AmeriCorps definition of "same project"), the applicant must submit an evaluation plan as an attachment (see the Submission of Additional Documents section for more information). If the applicant has previously received six or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed, the applicant must submit both an evaluation plan and an evaluation report as attachments.

Applicants should use the Evaluation Plan Template provided in the Application Forms as part of their application. The template document provides detailed information about the AmeriCorps evaluation requirements (45 CFR 2522.700-710) and specifies the information that must be provided for the evaluation plan to be approved by AmeriCorps. The evaluation plan will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

C. Eligibility Information

C.1. Eligible Applicants

The following non-federal entities (as defined in [2 CFR §200.69](#)) that propose to operate only within California are eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding through California Volunteers:

- Nonprofit organizations ([2 CFR §200.70](#))
- Institutions of higher education([2 CFR §200.55](#))
- Local government/public agencies ([2 CFR §200.64](#))
- State government agencies ([2 CFR §200.90](#))
- Indian Tribes within the state of California ([2 CFR §200.54](#))

Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award. See Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number and System for Award Management (SAM) for more information.

All eligible applicants must propose a program intervention that aligns with one or more of California Volunteers' focus areas.

Note: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to AmeriCorps. Federally-recognized Indian Tribes may also apply directly to AmeriCorps.

New Applicants

California Volunteers encourages organizations that have not received prior AmeriCorps funding to apply. To ensure accessibility to AmeriCorps resources and level the competition among experienced and new applicants/programs, California Volunteers may apply up to an additional 10% of the total possible score to eligible new applicants. A new applicant is one in which the legal applicant has not received prior AmeriCorps funding, and/or whose staff have not been employed as core program staff of a funded program, National Direct organization staff, state commission staff, or Corporation staff in the last five years.

A new applicant submitting a recompeting application for a funded program would not qualify for the additional 10% points. Similarly, a new applicant that intends to pass on the program implementation responsibility to an existing grantee or another entity that has experience operating an AmeriCorps program in the last five years, would not qualify for the additional 10% points.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but are not eligible to apply for Full Cost Fixed Amount grants.

Other Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of [the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended](#), organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this RFA.

Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which—

- 1) Has been assessed,
- 2) For which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- 3) That is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability,

that corporation is not eligible for an award under this RFA. A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this RFA.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, any organization described in the [Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. §501 \(c\)\(4\)](#) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for funding.

C.2. Community Partnership Requirements

In order to maximize community involvement in the AmeriCorps program, all applicants are required to develop partnerships with at least three independent entities that include *one public and one private* partner (nonprofit or for-profit entity). Partners should have a significant role in planning, operating, and sustaining the program (e.g. match contribution, training resources, supporting and supervising members. continuous improvement assessment, etc.).

C.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants **must** [register with the System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. Use the [SAM Quick Guide for Grantees for more information](#).

SAM registration must be renewed annually. AmeriCorps suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and physical address on all grant applications to California Volunteers. The legal applicant's name and physical address in eGrants must match exactly the applicant's SAM-registered information.**

Applications must include a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), which is generated as part of the SAM registration process. AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and UEI.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number. The UEI and Employer Identification Number must be entered by the organization's Grantee Administrator as an organization attribute, and this will apply the information to all applications for the organization.

If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time of award, California Volunteers may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

D. Application Review Information

D.1. California Volunteers Review and Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed and selected for funding using a multi-stage process that includes Compliance Check, Staff Review, Clarification and Feedback, and CV Commission approval. The review and selection process is intended to produce a balanced set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this RFA. California Volunteers' review and selection process will occur in several stages as follow.

Compliance Check

California Volunteers staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations by the deadline and that address any minor compliance issues within 24 hours will advance to Staff Review. See the *Application Instructions* and *Application Forms* to ensure submission of a compliant grant application. Applications that have major noncompliant issues identified may be disqualified or have points deducted from the application's total review score.

Minor compliance issues are those related to additional documents required that are unrelated to eligibility requirements and/or program design components.

Major compliance issues are those related to assessing eligibility requirements (e.g., received past the submission deadline, lacking an active SAM registration, etc.) and/or application components necessary to evaluate the quality of the applicant's proposed program design such as missing the program narrative, logic model, performance measures, and or detailed budget.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- is an eligible organization
- has an active SAM registration and UEI
- submitted an application by the submission deadline
- includes are required application components

Staff Review

In Staff Review, reviewers will evaluate each application against assessment criteria outlined in this RFA and the accompanying Application Instructions. Staff will review applications in teams of at least three and come to a consensus score for each criterion. Applications that do not meet the minimum score threshold will be released from consideration.

Clarification Period

The application review process for this grant competition will include a Clarification Period. During the Clarification Period, applicants may be asked for clarifying information regarding issues of significance in the application and budget. This information is used by CV in making final funding recommendations. Not all applications are clarified. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration.

NOTE: Applicants selected for competitive submission may need to respond to another round of clarification from AmeriCorps as part of their national grant application review process. This is

scheduled to occur between March and April. AmeriCorps will send clarification to CV during that time, which will then be forwarded to the applicant with instructions for submission.

Risk Assessment Evaluation

California Volunteers staff will assess the risks to the program posed by each applicant to determine the applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to those about the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. If California Volunteers determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Applicants may not be selected for funding if California Volunteers determines that the applicant's risks cannot be mitigated.

Applications submitted to the national grant competition will be subjected to a similar Risk Assessment Evaluation conducted by AmeriCorps.

In assessing risks, California Volunteers/AmeriCorps may consider the following criteria:

1. Due Diligence, including:
 - Federal debt delinquency
 - Suspension and debarment
 - Information available through Office of Management and Budget (OMB)- designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
 - [U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services](#)
 - [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
 - "Do Not Pay"
 - Reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
 - IRS Tax Form 990
 - [Oversight.gov](#)
 - Public Litigation Records
2. Operational and Financial Management, including:
 - Financial stability
 - [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\)](#)
3. Past Performance, including:
 - Applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
 - Timely compliance with applicable reporting requirements
 - Accuracy of data reported
 - Validity of performance measure data reported
 - Conformity to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards
 - Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
 - Timely closeout of other awards
 - Meeting matching requirements
 - Extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
 - Meeting National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) compliance (Use section [F.2.d. National Criminal History Check Requirements](#) and the [NSCHC webpage](#) for more information)

- Applicant's record on enrolling and retaining all awarded AmeriCorps member slots
4. Other Programmatic Risks, Financial, Organizational, Compliance, and Fraud including:
- Publicly available information, including from the applicant organization's website
 - Amount of funding requested by the organization
 - Other elements, such as keyword searches for prohibited activities

Applicants will find information to help them understand pre-award due diligence checks in the [AmeriCorps Due Diligence Review Process and Compliance](#) training available on the [Manage Your Grant](#) webpage. This content will help applicants obtain due diligence compliance and remain compliant throughout the grant life.

Selection

The primary consideration in the selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. Applicants must meet a minimum score threshold **and** satisfactorily address all clarification issues to be considered for funding. In lieu of a three-year operating grant, California Volunteers may award an application a limited-term "planning" or "program development" grant. A planning grant provides funds to support the development of an AmeriCorps program design and infrastructures needed to operate the program. A program development grant provides funds to support one year of implementation; where continued funding would be subject to available funds and satisfactory performance. Applicants not selected for competitive submission may be placed on the formula waitlist. Applicants will be notified at the time of Clarification if they have been conditionally approved for competitive submission, placed on the formula waitlist, or if they are being recommended for a planning grant or program development grant.

To help achieve a balanced portfolio for the State of California, final selections will be made based on key strategic considerations including the following:

- California Volunteers' Statewide Geographic Distribution Policy, in which the Commission will seek to ensure a minimum of 40 MSYs are placed in the Los Angeles region and 20 MSYs are placed in the remaining eight regions as determined by the California's Economic Strategy Panel. In order to achieve geographic parity, a program in an already represented region may be skipped, and another program may be selected. Under no circumstances will the Commission provide formula funding to an applicant that receives a score that is 10 or more points below the applicant it may displace.
- Ensure a minimum amount of funding for programs led by non-profit and non-state governmental organizations as required by AmeriCorps regulations.
- Supporting communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals.
- Supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems.
- Meeting California Volunteers' equity goal of engaging Californians from all backgrounds in service by providing a living stipend and additional benefits aimed at enhancing the member experience and bolstering member recruitment and retention.
- Meeting California Volunteers' goal of building a strong shared member experience, including bridging differences and fostering stronger feelings of connection among members and the communities they serve.
- Meeting California Volunteers' goal of creating workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members through onsite experience and training that lead to career pathways, including pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship programs, work experience

and job training programs, other workforce training and development programs, and hiring preferences or support.

California Volunteers reserves the right to bypass an applicant's state ranking on a case-by-case basis under the following circumstances:

- An applicant has multiple national service funding opportunities available;
- The Commission has constrained resources; and/or
- The applicant presents serious concerns around grant performance and/or fiduciary responsibilities discovered after rankings have been completed.

Based on the evaluation of these strategic considerations, applications may be selected for funding over applications with a greater degree of alignment with the review criteria. In selecting applicants to receive awards under this RFA, the Chief Service Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations and strategic considerations. Applications selected by the Chief Service Officer will be presented to the California Volunteers Commission for final approval. Funding decisions are final—there is no appeal process.

California Volunteers reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so. For example, consistent enrollment problems may result in applications being “right-sized” and awarded at the level of enrollment that the program has achieved in the past.

California Volunteers reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, in the event that unforeseen challenges or exigent circumstances make it impossible, impractical or inefficient to execute the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications submitted to CV in response to this RFA.

Feedback to Applicants

Applicants selected to proceed to the federal competition will receive feedback to strengthen their application at the time of Clarification. California Volunteers will work with applicants to shore up their application to ensure maximum viability at the national level. California Volunteers will provide feedback to all other applicants when funding decisions are announced.

D.2. Assessment Criteria

A. Executive Summary (0 percent)

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from this template:

“The [Name of the organization] will have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing].

The AmeriCorps investment will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and Federal Funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.”

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-Cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue (use the Mandatory Supplemental Information) in the Executive Summary because

they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

B. Program Design (50 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. Please ensure the Community and Logic Model incorporates the funding priorities listed above, for example supporting communities historically excluded and/or underserved from government services, addressing structural and institutional inequities, or increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.

1. Community Need and Logic Model (24 points)

The applicant's program narrative will provide a detailed summary of the community problem, including:

- The role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem.
- The community need as it relates to the [CDC's Social Vulnerability Index](#) and to communicate the severity and prevalence of the problem.

The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the organization's Logic Model. No additional narrative is needed other than what is contained within the logic model.

The applicant will depict in the Logic Model:

- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
 - Locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Context in which the intervention is delivered (e.g., the setting where the intervention is delivered)
 - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
 - Characteristics of AmeriCorps members, including specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required to implement the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - Duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
 - Dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
 - Target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e., number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted, equity gaps closed). If applicable, identify which [National Performance Measures](#) will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate meaningful changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The Logic Model is a visual representation of the applicant's Theory of Change. Programs should include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the Logic Model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their Logic Model. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's Logic Model and should represent significant program activities.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention. Logic Model content that exceeds eight pages will not be reviewed.

Note: The Logic Model is also included in the California Performance Measurement Worksheet (PMW). California Volunteers recommends applicants complete the PMW first and copy over the Logic Model components to eGrants. Be mindful of the page limit on the Logic Model.

2. Evidence Base (20 points)

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier (use the Mandatory Supplemental Information). Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design, including program aligned with the priority areas (use the A.2 Funding Priorities section), will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier (12 points)

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the Logic Model.

In 2023, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 25 percent, Moderate 12 percent, Preliminary 20 percent, and Pre-Preliminary 43 percent. As these figures indicate, AmeriCorps values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, **applicants should not be deterred from applying for funding due to their current evidence level.**

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application and Logic Model (use the Mandatory Supplemental Information for a definition of "same intervention") may submit up to two of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Community and Logic Model sections of the application:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population, including evidence of current or historic inequities facing the population;
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;
- Dosage (frequency and duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
- The context in which the intervention is delivered; and
- Outcome of the intervention.

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. Submission of additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements

described in the Notice (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (use the Mandatory Supplemental Information.)

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the Notice instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Information, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Evidence Quality (8 points)

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

Applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years;
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants that are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:

- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years;
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier that do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this Notice and will not be considered for funding.

3. Funding Priority (up to 3 additional points per priority)

The applicant proposed program design (as articulated in the program narrative and/or logic model) incorporates one or more (3 additional points for each of the following) program design elements:

- **Organizations leading service in communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals**, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities.
- **Climate action and environmental stewardship**, including supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities.
- Programs that **provide additional benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at enhancing member experience and bolstering member recruitment and retention** such as paying more than the minimum living allowance, transportation, housing, food, etc.
- Programs that **create workforce pathways** for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support.
- **Evidence-based interventions** on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#) that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence.
- Programs that **support civic bridgebuilding** programs and projects to reduce polarization and community divisions; and providing training in civic bridgebuilding skills and techniques to AmeriCorps members.
- Programs focused on **improving educational outcomes** for economically disadvantaged children, including improved school readiness; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or increasing readiness and access for post-secondary education and career opportunities; and those that prepare AmeriCorps members to enter teaching careers.

4. Member Experience (6 points)

- The applicant details how AmeriCorps members will be provided an opportunity to be leaders and gain skills during their term of service that will be valued by future employers (e.g., workforce pathways, increasing levels of responsibility and leadership roles for members).
- The applicant details how AmeriCorps members will be provided a high quality orientation to the community they will serve in that is from an asset based frame and guided and informed by the community.

C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. Organizational Background and Staffing (15 points)

- The applicant details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing, providing oversight, and monitoring the program.
- The applicant has facilitated, partnered, or participated in educational or workforce development programs (i.e., pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship, work experience and job training programs, etc.)
- The applicant describes their organization's mission and relevant experience in areas such as volunteer recruitment and management, community outreach, overcoming project implementation challenges, etc.

2. Member Supervision (6 points)

- The applicant details how AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service (e.g., structure for member

supervision: cadence and format of supervisor/AmeriCorps member check-ins, member and supervisor opportunities to assess strengths and opportunities for growth, member training plan, etc.).

- The applicant details how AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations (e.g., structure for support of supervisors, training plan for supervisors related to supervision and AmeriCorps rules and regulations, cadence and format of AmeriCorps supervisors/their supervisors check ins, opportunities to assess strengths and opportunities for growth of supervisors, etc.).

3. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (4 points)

- The leadership and staff of the organization have similar lived experience as the beneficiary population and/or community being served.
- The applicant's definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility is demonstrated by the organization (e.g., diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers) and the organization upholds a supportive and safe environment for individuals of diverse backgrounds.

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below.

1. Member Recruitment (7 points)

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support successful recruitment of AmeriCorps members best suited to serve the community, for example from geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.

2. Member Retention (8 points)

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support retention of AmeriCorps members (e.g., additional member benefits such as increasing above the minimum living allowance, supporting workforce pathways, certifications, coaching for members, resume building, individual benefit as well as community building, network building, member recognition, alumni programming, etc.).

3. Data Collection (7 points)

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support data collection, continuous improvement activities, and evaluation in service to evaluating the interventions and impact on the community and the member experience).

4. Budget Alignment to Program Design (3 points)

- The applicant's budget is aligned to the program design outlined in the narrative, meaning activities discussed in the narrative are incorporated in the budget in the agency or applicant share.

D.3. Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying:

- All applicants must propose programs that address the focus areas identified on page 6 of the RFA. The focus area should represent a significant portion of the program design and outcomes.
- All applicants should request at least 20 MSY. Applicants requesting less than 20 MSYs must include a compelling rationale as part of the program narrative or their application will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

- All applicants must provide a living allowance of at least \$25,500 for full-time AmeriCorps members (if applicable) and a prorated equivalent amount for all other slot types.
- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CV must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: [45 CFR §2522.910-.940](#)), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.

E. Application and Submission Information

E.1. Submission to California Volunteers

Applicants must submit their application electronically through eGrants and submit additional documents to California Volunteers using the CV AmeriCorps Community in Salesforce.

To complete the application, please:

1. Download the following documents from the CV website at <https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/grants/americorps/>:
 - a. *Request for Applications* (this document),
 - b. *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*,
 - c. *Application Instructions*,
 - d. *Application Forms*
 - e. *National Performance Measures Instructions*
2. Follow the instructions included in this document for preparing an application.
3. Submit a complete Application in eGrants.
4. Submit all required Additional Documents by following the guidance in the *Application Instructions*.

CV recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and **begin the application at least two weeks** before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a Word document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 5 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use his or her own eGrants account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Applicants should contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via [eGrants Questions](#) if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. National Service Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/>

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the competition to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

If circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send a paper copy of the application via overnight carrier to the address below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically. Due to office closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, applicants in this situation must coordinate with California Volunteers to ensure their application is received on time.

California Volunteers
ATTN: AmeriCorps 2022
1400 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this RFA also apply to paper applications. CV does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

E.2. Application Content

Complete applications must include the following elements in eGrants:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: Automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design
 - Organizational Capability
 - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
 - Evaluation Summary/Plan
- Logic Model
- Performance Measures
- Standard Form 424A Budget
- Continuation Changes
- Clarification
- Authorization, [Assurances](#), and [Certifications](#)

Applicants must also submit required Additional Documents using the CV AmeriCorps Community in Salesforce (see Application Instructions):

- All applicants must provide:
 - Proposed Service Site Locations
 - California Performance Measurement Worksheets
 - Labor Organization Certification Form
 - Operational and Financial Management Survey
 - Audited Financial Statements
 - Schedule of Federal Expenditures
- New applicants must also provide:
 - New Applicant Certification Form
 - AmeriCorps Organizational Self-Assessment
- Recompeting applicants must also provide:
 - Evaluation Plan
 - Evaluation Report (if applicable)
- Fixed Amount Grant applicants must also provide:
 - AmeriCorps Budget Worksheet
- As applicable, applicants may be required to provide:
 - Evidence Base Supporting Documents – required if claiming Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong Evidence
 - Request for Alternative Match Schedule – required if requesting an alternate match schedule
 - Requests to Waive Requirements
 - Minimum Living Allowance Waiver Request – required if living allowance is below the minimum
 - Match Waiver Request – required if requesting to waive match requirements
 - Minimum Program Size Waiver Request – required if minimum program size is not met
 - Minimum Number of Members per Service Location Waiver Request – required if members will be placed by themselves (without other AmeriCorps members at the same service location)

E.3. Page Limits

There are page limits for the Narratives and Logic Model:

- Narratives
 - Applications must not exceed 10 double-spaced pages for the Narrative as the pages print out from eGrants.
 - The application sections that count towards the page limit include:
 - SF-424 Face Sheet
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives
 - The application page limit does not include:
 - Evaluation Summary/Plan
 - Clarification Summary
 - Continuation Changes
 - Budget, Performance Measures
 - Any required additional documents
- Logic Model
 - The Logic Model may not exceed eight pages when printed with the application from the "Review" tab in AmeriCorps' web-based management system.

E.4. Application Submission Deadline

Applications (both the eGrants submission and the Additional Documents) must be received no later than **November 2, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time** in order to be considered.

CV will not consider applications received after the deadline, except when noted below. CV reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted on the funding opportunity website.

E.5. Late Applications

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this RFA are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- Submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
 - Timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
 - Ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the AmeriCorps Hotline
 - Information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps Hotline
 - Other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- Ensure that California Volunteers receives the written explanation or justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s), via email to funding@californiavolunteers.ca.gov. The written explanation and evidence must be received no later than 24 hours after the application deadline stated in the RFA.

Communication with CV staff, including program officer of a current grantee, is not a substitution for the above protocol. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the required timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

Please note: CV will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are encouraged to continue working on their application until it is submitted. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please carefully review and follow the guidance above, and submit your application as soon as possible.

F. Award Administration Information

F.1. Potential Change to RFA and Supplemental Guidance

This *Request for Applications* was created in good faith and based on the most recent federal guidance available. The amount of funds available for AmeriCorps, as well as new grant limits and requirements, are contingent on final federal appropriations and AmeriCorps's final allocation of formula funds. These and other factors may require changes to the guidance and to this RFA. As necessary, CV will issue all updates and supplemental materials at the earliest possible date. All supplemental materials and updates will be available on the CV website at [CaliforniaVolunteers.ca.gov](https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov). **Applicants are advised to check the website at least weekly.**

This RFA provides a broad overview of AmeriCorps guidance, highlighting many basic components and rules to provide a general understanding of the complexities and intricacies of AmeriCorps programming and requirements.

The full AmeriCorps regulations, [45 CFR § 2520-2550](https://www.ecfr.gov), are available online at www.ecfr.gov. Successful applicants will be required to comply with these regulations, AmeriCorps provisions, and federal and state policies. Federal funds provided under this grant are identified by the Assistance Listing Number 94.006.

F.2. Governing Documents

A grantee's fully executed AmeriCorps contract incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant as well as the AmeriCorps regulations (45 CFR Sections 2520-2550), AmeriCorps General and Specific Terms and Conditions, and California Volunteers Policies and Requirements.

F.3. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions

All awards made under this RFA will be subject to the 2024 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the 2024 Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable). These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/directs-territories-tribes>.

F.4. Uniform Guidance

All awards under this RFA are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), now consolidated in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

F.5. Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants are required to submit a variety of reports which are due to CV at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Once the grant is awarded, grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CV with high-quality performance measure data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following areas of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure
- The data reported is complete
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors

- The grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the grantee's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding.

F.6. National Service Criminal History Checks Requirement

All AmeriCorps members and staff charging time (including match) to an AmeriCorps cost-reimbursement grant must have completed National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) prior to start. In California, these are conducted by two approved vendors - Truescreen and Fieldprint. All required check components must be conducted and results considered according to AmeriCorps, CV and the program's own policy, with the individual cleared prior to the start of service and/or time on the grant. No one convicted of murder (as defined in 18 USC 1111) and/or registered or required to be registered on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; nor who refuses to undergo the checks or who provides a false statement with regards to the checks process, may be deemed eligible. The program must set its own selection criteria that include at least these minimum disqualifiers while being mindful of state and federal Civil Rights & nondiscrimination laws, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Required Criminal History Check Components are defined as follows:

1. Nationwide name-based National Sex Offender Public Registry Check via **Truescreen*** ;
2. Statewide Criminal History Registry Check(s) in the State of residence (out-of-state applicants) **and** in the State where the individual will serve / work (California)* using **Truescreen**
3. FBI National Fingerprint-based Check using **Fieldprint** or using the **California Dept of Justice (CA DOJ)** via CV's [waiver](#)

Refer to the [CV National Service Criminal History Checks Policy](#) for detailed requirements and the [CV National Service Criminal History Checks Guide](#) for details on how to properly conduct the checks using the approved vendors. The cost of checks must be included in the budget. Consider allocating some to the match share, as this is a common pre-launch expense. See the budget worksheet for more detail.

F.7. Requests for Improper Payment Information

At the request of AmeriCorps, CV may, from time to time, request documentation from grantees in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on temporary manual hold, reimbursement only, or other remedies as appropriate. In addition, CV/AmeriCorps may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

F.8. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CV and AmeriCorps reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so ([2 CFR §200.315 \(b\)](#)).

F.9. Re-Focusing of Funding

California Volunteers reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

F.10. Invoice Timeline

Grant awards through this RFA are distributed on a cost-reimbursement basis. Payment of invoices can take in excess of 45 days. Applicant should ensure their organization has enough funds on hand to meet payroll and other critical expenses to operate the program while invoices are processed for payment.